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REVIEWS.

FOUR BOOKS ON SIENA.

THE STORY OF SIENA. By Edmund G. Gardner. J. M. Dent & Co., London.

A HISTORY OF SIENA. By Langton Douglas. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

THE ENSAMPLES OF FRA FILIPPO: A Study of Mediæval Siena. By William Heywood. Enrico Torrini, Siena.

THE PAVEMENT MASTERS OF SEINA. By R. H. Hobart Cust. George Bell & Sons, London.

ONE of the greatest pleasures which we wanderers from this new and ever-changing world of the West find in European travel is to seek out those strange old cities that have been left stranded on the sands of time, where Change and Progress have never come with destructive hands to tear down the quaint, beautiful, or picturesque structures reared by the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, and make way for the commonplace buildings of to-day. To visit one of these cities is like a plunge into the past. When we enter their grim portals we find ourselves in another world, the world of the long ago. Our workaday life is forgotten, and we dwell among the armored knights and the gorgeously dressed burghers of old. In a few hours we gain a more vivid and personal realization of the ages that are gone than by the study of many books.

These places are small, and they lie off the great highways of travel. Every country possesses them, but they must be sought out. They exist because they have been forgotten. The cities that have always prospered, like London, Paris, Vienna, or Milan, cannot afford us this instruction or this pleasure. Each age has destroyed the work of the preceding, to make room for something better suited to its own requirements. Ancient monuments there are, indeed, but they are scattered far apart, and are so hemmed in by the structures of later times, their surroundings are so incongruous, that they largely fail of their effect.

Of all these unchanging cities, Siena is to my mind the most attractive. It is practically unaltered since the dolorous

hour in the year 1555, when, after enduring sufferings the slightest narrative of which still makes the blood run cold, the proud republic which had spared Florence when she lay at her mercy after the battle of Montaperti bowed her queenly neck to the Florentine yoke. Once famous for her wealth, and boasting of bankers who, like the Salimbeni and Chigi, were the Rothschilds and the Morgans of their times, trade and manufactures have forsaken her gates, and, though she has been spared the grinding poverty that has descended upon many famous Italian cities, she has shrunk to a provincial town. Once boasting a hundred thousand inhabitants, all intensely active in the pursuit of power and gold, her numbers and her energies have declined until less than thirty thousand sleep and dream behind her battlements. And so there has been no occasion for any change. The proud dwellings, churches, and public buildings that their ancestors left have been more than sufficient for the wants of her people; and they have left everything as it was. The lofty square towers that crowned the palaces of her factious burghers, whence they made war upon one another with a malignant fury rare even in Italian annals, and which were so numerous that the town, seen from afar, was compared to a canebrake, have indeed fallen, some thrown down by the conquering owner of an adjacent palace, some demolished by the public authorities to preserve the peace, still others beneath time's crumbling hand. But otherwise the city has scarcely altered, and the touch of the passing ages, elsewhere so heavy, has lingered softly and caressingly upon palace and temple.

And the past that is here enshrined is so worthy of preservation. It is not the grim, stern past that still lives for us in so many forgotten mediæval cities; it is the beautiful past of the Italian Renaissance, when life and art were one, when men loved beauty even as the Greeks, and strove yet more intensely for its realization, though without the unerring instinct which was the supreme gift of the gods to Hellas.

Siena has always had her annalists, mediæval and modern, and in recent times she has had ardent lovers who have

come from beyond the Alps to take up their abode with her and worship at her shrine. In Italian there is a large literature devoted to her history, her life, and her art, and not a little is to be found in French and German; but in English she has been strangely neglected. Florence, her rival and conqueror, has so fascinated those of English speech that they have had little time or thought for the Queen of Southern Tuscany, who sits enthroned so proudly on her hilltop. And though she is but forty miles from Florence, the trains run so inconveniently that few of the myriads of sight-seers hastening from Florence to Rome go that way. But now that the inexhaustible mine of Florentine history and art has been worked so fully that little remains for the seeker to discover, attention has been turned to her less fortunate rival, and Siena's turn has come.

And it is a story well worth the telling. More emotional than the Florentines, passing continually from the mad pursuit of pleasure that won for her from the infamous Beccadelli the reproachful title of *Molles Senae* that clings to her still, to faction fights whose demoniac deeds shocked even the men of Renaissance Italy, or to spasms of religious exaltation when, with common accord, they dedicated the city to the Madonna in an ecstasy of fervor that bordered on insanity, the history of Siena is full of sudden changes, of hairbreadth escapes, of atrocious crimes, of heaven-soaring aspirations, and closes in a burst of lurid glory with the noble heroism and unspeakable horrors of the final siege. And when we remember that this thrilling history is associated with some of art's most splendid triumphs, when we realize that these fiendish and these splendid deeds were wrought beneath the shadow of that Cathedral which is one of the most beautiful things on which the eye of man has ever rested, and of that Mangia Tower that stands forever unrivaled in its warlike grace, it is not surprising that men's hearts are now turning to the hill-set city. Now, no more than in the past, can she be the successful rival of Florence, whose infinite variety Rome alone can surpass; but she is rich in beauty as in interest.

Two men could not be found better able to treat of Siena than Prof. Douglas and Prof. Gardner. The former, whose excellent work on Fra Angelico has superseded all others, loves Siena so much that something of that undying hatred against Florence and the Florentines that still rankles in every Sienese bosom has crept into his own, and tinges his judgment of the artistic achievements of the two cities. Though he does not say it, one can see that he prefers Duccio to Giotto, the Lorenzetti to Orcagna, Mariano to Luca della Robbia. But this is well. The Florentine masters have had so many champions that it is time for some one to insist upon the debt that art owes to the less famous masters of Siena.

Prof. Gardner, who in his "Story of Florence," in the admirable Mediæval Towns Series, to which the book now reviewed belongs, had given us the best of all popular accounts of Florence, has shown himself at home in his new field.

Though the title of the works is so similar, they are scarcely rivals. Neither takes the place of the other. Prof. Douglas's book is a history that gives us a full and connected account of the politics, literature, and art of Siena. The historical matter in Prof. Gardner's is much more limited, and instead he gives us an elaborate guide to lead us through Siena's winding streets. Both are indispensable to him who loves Siena and would know her past and understand her treasures. In its large paper edition Prof. Gardner's book is almost as handsome as Prof. Douglas's beautifully illustrated volume; in the other form it can be slipped into the pocket beside the indispensable Baedeker.

Yet neither furnishes all that we should like to know. The dignity of history does not permit them to enter often into the private houses of the Sienese, and show us how these men lived and loved, hated and died. Fortunately a man has arisen to show us this. It seems strange to see a book published in English in old Siena; but in elegance of printing and freedom from typographical errors, Mr. Heywood's work should bring a blush to the cheeks of many an English

or American publisher. Taking for his text the moral tales of the good Fra Filippo—a rather slender peg on which to hang so rich a vestment—Mr. Heywood gives us the most living and faithful picture of Renaissance Italian life to be found within the lids of any single volume with which we are acquainted. His book is an admirable conception, admirably carried out. He seems to have chosen Siena for his home, and he is a guest of whom she may well be proud.

One of the most striking things in Siena is the cathedral pavement, with its wonderful pictures in stone. Perhaps they are a splendid mistake; perhaps a pavement where men walk is not a place for pictures; but he who visits Siena in August, when the wooden covering that ordinarily protects and hides them has been removed, can never forget their varied and beautiful designs, gradually changing from the outline drawings of the earlier masters to the chiaroscuro of Beccafumi. Mr. Cust has devoted to the subject prodigious study. He has ransacked every source of information, and tells us everything that is certainly known or probably conjectured. No one who goes to visit Siena in August should be without this book to guide him; but the book itself is dry as dust, and almost unreadable. The cuts, however, give one a very fair idea of the designs, and are worth the price of the volume.

G. B. ROSE.

THE MAN CHRIST IN LITERATURE.

THE CHRIST OF THE AGES: In Words of Holy Writ. Being the Story of Jesus, Drawn from the Old and New Testaments, and Compiled by Wm. Norman Guthrie. The Western Literary Press, Cincinnati. Cloth, gilt.

There is a temptation to all fluent scholars—and seemingly a resistless one to those of more imaginative and poetic temperament—about the Christ themes of Holy Writ. That they are as dangerous as they are tempting, all experience has taught; for the boundary line between the true and the irreverent is so vague and mistily defined, that the impulsive foot is apt to overstep it, unknowing.

So-called "lives of Christ" infest literature—many of them